

Amendments to the claims:

Claims 1 – 3: (canceled)

4. (currently amended) ~~Use according to one of Claims 1 to 3,~~
~~characterized in that~~ The method according to claim 18, wherein the agent is
brought in contact with the hair during or after exposure of the hair to chemical
and/or physical noxae.

Claims 5 – 11: (canceled)

12. (currently amended) ~~Use according to one of Claims 1 to 11,~~
~~characterized in that~~ The method according to claim 18, wherein the cosmetic
agent is a solution, emulsion, foam, cream or gel.

13. (currently amended) ~~Use according to one of Claims 1 to 12,~~
~~characterized in that~~ The method of claim 18, wherein the agent is brought into
contact with the hair ~~for a duration of 1 to 60 minutes~~ at a temperature between
20 °C and 60 °C.

14. (withdrawn) Permanent wave agent containing
(A) natural zein and
(B) at least one hair keratin-reducing substance.

15. (withdrawn) Agent for oxidative treatment of hair containing

(A) natural zein and

(B) at least one oxidant.

16. (withdrawn) Agent according to Claim 15, characterized in that the oxidant is selected from among potassium bromate, sodium bromate, sodium perborate, dehydroascorbic acid, hydrogen peroxide and urea peroxide.

17. (withdrawn) Hair colorant containing

(A) natural zein and

(B) one or more oxidation dye precursors.

18. (new) A method for improving the condition of hair, comprising the following steps:

providing a cosmetic hair-treatment agent comprising at least one cosmetic carrier and from 0.01 to 10.0 percent by weight of natural zein as an unhydrolyzed protein obtained from corn;

bringing the hair in contact with said agent for a time sufficient for hardening, strengthening, restructuring, repairing or stabilizing or for increasing luster, volume, or combability of hair;

rinsing or washing said agent out with water or an aqueous agent.

19. (new) The method according to claim 18, wherein the time sufficient for hardening, strengthening, restructuring, repairing or stabilizing or for increasing the luster, volume or combability of the hair is from 1 to 60 minutes.